



NAME: CDR ROBERT J. TOSATTO

JOB TITLE: DIRECTOR, MEDICAL RESERVE  
CORPS PROGRAM

AGENCY: OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL

### **Description of Current Position:**

Commander (CDR) Robert Tosatto is currently the Director of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program in the Office of the Surgeon General. The mission of the MRC is to serve citizens and communities throughout the United States by establishing local teams of civilian volunteers – mostly medical and public health professionals – to strengthen the public health infrastructure and improve emergency preparedness. The MRC Program Office, under CDR Tosatto's leadership, is responsible for increasing nationwide awareness about the program, establishing MRC units in areas of the country that may benefit from such a resource, recruiting volunteers, providing technical assistance to MRC units, and coordinating activities of the program at the local, state, regional and national levels.

The MRC program has grown tremendously under CDR Tosatto's guidance, from 42 MRC units and less than 5,000 volunteers in 2003 to over 280 units and more than 40,000 volunteers at the end of June 2005. Many MRC units now have activities supporting the goals and objectives of the Healthy People 2010 initiative, which help to strengthen the public health infrastructure. For example, MRCs play a key role in their communities' diabetes detection efforts, hypertension monitoring, cancer screening, influenza vaccination efforts, and a variety of similar programs. CDR Tosatto consistently encourages MRC units to focus on the Surgeon General's priorities for public health in their activities.

MRC units are also preparing for and responding to public health emergencies in their communities. MRC volunteers take training courses and also participate in drills and exercises with their local response partners. And when needed, MRC volunteers are there to help support the community emergency response. For example, after the 2004 hurricanes, MRC volunteers augmented the staff of community hospitals, manned public health hotlines, helped with evacuations and worked in local shelters and first aid stations.

Prior to his selection by the Surgeon General to lead the Medical Reserve Corps, CDR Tosatto was the Director of the Office for Eurasia in the HHS Office of Global Health Affairs. In this position, he served the Secretary of Health and

Human Services and other high-level executives in international relations regarding health-related issues.

Included in his portfolio was management of the HHS Biotechnology Engagement Program, which provided cooperative projects to redirect the efforts and expertise of former Soviet bioweapons scientists toward peaceful outcomes.

CDR Tosatto had signature authority and responsibility for this \$45 million program. He successfully engaged over 6,000 scientists and other “high risk personnel” in over 100 projects.

CDR Tosatto worked at a very high level in this assignment - including top-level interactions with the National Security Council, and the Departments of State, Defense, Energy, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency. He represented the Office of Global Health Affairs in meetings with Ministry of Health officials from Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, and other European and Asian countries.

#### **Education/Degrees/Certificates/Institutions:**

CDR Tosatto received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Pharmacy.

He also received both his Masters of Public Health (MPH) and his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, in the Schools of Public Health and Business.

#### **Qualifying Skills for Current Position:**

CDR Tosatto received a solid foundation for his career with his pharmacy skills and additional academic training.

His experience as a clinical pharmacist has helped him to develop his organizational, multi-tasking, logical reasoning, and problem-solving skills, as well as sharpen his ability to communicate, compromise, and negotiate.

CDR Tosatto's graduate degrees have helped to broaden his experience in the areas of public health policy and management.

#### **Reasons for Choosing the USPHS as a Career:**

CDR Tosatto wanted a career where he would be able to have a major impact on public health, and a career that would satisfy his sense of adventure. The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) has given him opportunities where he could affect the lives of millions – all while having the chance to travel the world.

**Previous USPHS Assignments:**

1. **COSTEP**, Indian Health Service (IHS), Gallup Indian Medical Center, Gallup, NM
2. **COSTEP**, IHS Headquarters, Rockville, MD
3. **Pharmacy Resident**, IHS, PHS Indian Hospital, Tuba City, AZ
4. **Staff Pharmacist**, IHS, Not-tsoo Gah-nee Health Center, Fort Hall, ID
5. **Chief Pharmacist**, IHS, Wanblee Health Center, Wanblee, SD
6. **Medical Staff Coordinator**, Medical Staff Office, SAMHSA/CMHS, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, DC
7. **Executive Officer**, Office of Clinical Services, SAMHSA/CMHS, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, DC
8. **Director**, Medical Staff Office, SAMHSA/CMHS, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, DC
9. **Senior International Health Officer**, Office for Europe and N. Eurasia, Office of Global Health Affairs, Rockville, MD
10. **Director**, Office for Eurasia, Office of Global Health Affairs, Rockville, MD

**Most Rewarding USPHS Professional Experience:**

CDR Tosatto's deployment to Fort Dix, NJ in May 1999 as Chief Pharmacist during the early stages of "Operation Provide Refuge" was a definitive USPHS experience. This two-week assignment involved caring for the refugees fleeing war-torn Kosovo in the former Yugoslavia. Thousands of patients were seen; many of whom had serious healthcare problems. CDR Tosatto was impressed by the high level of collaboration between the diverse healthcare team, which included civilians, National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) members, PHS officers and providers from the Department of Defense. It was an extremely remarkable experience to have people from such different backgrounds working together to achieve a common goal.

**Other Professional Interests/Activities:**

CDR Tosatto served as a Special Assistant to the former Chief Pharmacist Officer, RADM Richard Walling, where he was responsible for tracking pharmacy-related issues and coordinating pharmacist recruitment activities.

CDR Tosatto entered the USPHS in order to have an impact on public health. He was looking for a career that would satisfy him on a professional and personal level. It is clear that his positions have provided him with the challenge to influence health issues both nationally and internationally. CDR Tosatto has truly made, and will continue to make, a difference on the lives of millions.

*By LT Renmeet Gujral*